

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Edgewood Middle School is seeing green after successful Eco-fy Edgewood event**

With the celebration of Earth Day on April 22, and just shy of National Arbor Day on April 26, Edgewood Middle School students and staff announce their most recent efforts to ramp up green initiatives and “eco-fy” the school.

In March of this year, the school held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Eco-fy Edgewood event, organized by the Edgewood Middle School Ecology Club. The focus of this year’s event was endangered species, and the festivities kicked off with a schoolwide lesson on the importance of biodiversity and protecting identified endangered species.

Each class was given “creation time” during which students designed an endangered species replica for an assigned biome. Students created hub-cap sea turtles, a polar bear of plastic bags, a recyclable hippo, tin foil elephants, and paper mâché animals – just to name a few – which all went on display in the lobby and hallways of Edgewood Middle throughout early April.

“Each year, our Eco-fy Edgewood event gets more and more buy-in by the students. It’s incredible to see the results of a little creative freedom, a topic kids love, and a staff of amazing educators,” said Kristie Smith, Edgewood Middle science teacher, 2019 Harford County Public Schools Teacher of the Year finalist, and co-leader of the eco-fy event.

The displays of endangered species were entered in a penny-war contest to help raise the money needed for Edgewood Middle to officially “adopt” an endangered species through the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The school raised \$220, enough money to adopt four species! The stuffed toy polar bear, ocelot, pygmy elephant, and tree frog sent from the WWF following the adoptions are now circulating the school for “eco-selfies” when students perform an act of kindness toward the planet.

Finally, the event concluded with completion of the school’s new Kindness Rocks rain garden, where pollinator plant species were planted and beds were mulched by the Ecology Club students. Painted rocks with messages of kindness and love decorate the rain garden.

“Students had a big ‘Aha’ moment when they realized their rain garden rocks were going into a garden to help endangered insects, like the bees we read about in class,” said Jennifer Knoll, Edgewood Middle science teacher and co-leader of the eco-fy event.

Thanks to a \$1,300 grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources; sod removal and assistance from Michele Dobson of the Harford County Department of Public Works; native plants from Kollar Nursery; and lots of help from Harford Glen, the rain garden project was a huge success!

In addition to the beautiful native plants from Kollar Nursery, the school also received 200 saplings from the Harford County Forestry Board, which students and staff took home to plant, as well as a 7 ft redbud tree that was planted on the school grounds. Students will be sharing tree-selfies for a display in celebration of Arbor Day.

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